

Review Article

Research priorities for the conservation of Nepal's lesser terrestrial vertebrates

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ABSTRACT

Located along the boundary of two zoogeographic provinces, and with the highest peaks and deepest valleys on Earth, Nepal is a center of adaptive radiation for many taxa. Early zoological research was mostly focused on high-profile large mammals due to availability of funding and policy priorities, but knowledge gaps remain for most other vertebrate taxa. Technologies ranging from genetic mapping to GPS, GIS, digital cameras and micro-transmitters have advanced with time and greatly expanded research capacities. Here, we present our suggestions of research needs for the lesser terrestrial vertebrate fauna of Nepal and the broader Himalayan region, pointing out knowledge gaps and suggesting where to go from here. The growing numbers of Nepali researchers focusing on small mammalian and avian research is encouraging, but the status of many taxa remains unknown and much of the country remains under-surveyed for breeding and migratory populations. Major knowledge gaps persist for reptiles and amphibians and for the role of local wildlife markets in exploitation. We conclude with suggestions on priorities for research on, and conservation of, Nepal's lesser terrestrial vertebrates.

Key words: Amphibians, birds, conservation, mammals, Nepal, research, reptiles

